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COURSE BROCHURE

Advanced Qualitative Research for Strategy and Policy Decisions Training Course

16 – 27 August 2027
Amsterdam

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Registered in the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia

Advanced Qualitative Research for Strategy and Policy Decisions Training Course

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Qualitative Research for Strategy and Policy Decisions is a 2-week advanced training course for policy analysts and strategy researchers who must turn interviews, focus groups and documents into a qualitative evidence brief with costed policy options. Leaders now expect strategy to rest on the lived experience of citizens, customers and staff, not only on dashboards. Jupiter Prime Training presents qualitative research as a disciplined route from fieldwork to defensible choices.

Why Qualitative Research Matters Now

Three forces push qualitative research to the centre of strategy work. Service users and employees expect to be heard before reforms reach them, so consultation is now part of legitimacy. Digital channels produce vast volumes of open text, from complaints to meeting transcripts, that numbers alone cannot explain. Executive committees also ask why a measure moved, not just whether it moved. An organisation that handles interview and document evidence well spots resistance early and designs options people can live with; one that handles it badly cherry-picks quotes and loses trust. The course rests on established traditions of thematic analysis, grounded coding and rigorous qualitative reporting.

Who Gains Most from Qualitative Research

- Analysts responsible for gathering stakeholder views before a strategy or policy is drafted
- Researchers who design interview guides, recruit informants and protect participant confidentiality
- Specialists who code transcripts and documents and defend the themes they report
- Advisers who convert research findings into option papers for senior decision makers
- Evaluation staff who explain why initiatives succeed or stall in practice

A strategy unit or policy office that sends several researchers together gains most, because its members leave with a shared codebook discipline and one agreed way of moving from evidence to options.

Qualitative Research Capabilities

Participants move from framing a researchable question to presenting options that a committee can weigh, with every step traceable to transcripts and source documents.

- Design sampling strategies and interview guides that answer a defined strategic question — research sponsors
- Facilitate focus groups that surface disagreement without steering the conversation — consultation leads
- Build and test a codebook with inter-coder checks — research quality reviewers
- Analyse transcripts and documents into themes supported by an audit trail — policy committees
- Weigh competing policy options against thematic evidence and stakeholder positions — senior decision makers
- Communicate findings with balanced quotations and clear limitations — executives and the public

Key Qualitative Research Terms

- Thematic analysis — a method for identifying, organising and reporting patterns of meaning across interview, focus group or document data.
- Codebook — a structured list of codes with definitions, inclusion rules and examples that keeps coding consistent across researchers.
- Purposive sampling — deliberately selecting informants who hold the experience or position most relevant to the research question.
- Data saturation — the point at which further interviews add no new codes or insights to the emerging themes.
- Reflexivity — the researcher's ongoing scrutiny of how their own position and assumptions shape data collection and interpretation.
- Audit trail — a documented record linking each finding back to coded extracts, decisions and source material.

Qualitative Research Day by Day

Day 1: Framing Strategic Questions for Inquiry

- Research Question Framing — Linking Inquiry to a Pending Strategic Choice
- Qualitative Versus Quantitative Fit — Choosing Evidence Suited to Why Questions
- Stakeholder Landscape Mapping — Deciding Whose Voices the Study Needs
- Research Design Logic — Matching Case, Exploratory or Evaluative Approaches
- Study Charter — Agreeing Scope, Sponsor Expectations and Timelines

Day 2: Ethics, Access and Sampling

- Informed Consent Protocols — Protecting Informants and Organisational Credibility
- Confidentiality and Anonymisation Rules — Handling Sensitive Policy Testimony
- Purposive and Snowball Sampling — Reaching Hard-to-Access Informants
- Sample Size and Saturation Planning — Justifying When Fieldwork Stops
- Gatekeeper Negotiation — Securing Access Without Compromising Independence

Day 3: In-Depth Interviewing

- Semi-Structured Interview Guides — Balancing Consistency with Room to Probe
- Probing and Laddering Techniques — Uncovering Motives Behind Stated Positions
- Elite and Expert Interviews — Managing Power Dynamics with Senior Informants
- Remote Interview Practice — Keeping Rapport and Data Quality Online
- Interview Debrief Notes — Capturing Context Before Memory Fades

Day 4: Focus Groups and Deliberative Methods

- Focus Group Composition — Deciding Homogeneous or Mixed Participant Groups
- Moderator Guides and Stimulus Material — Testing Draft Proposals with Citizens
- Group Dynamics Management — Handling Dominant Voices and Silent Members
- Deliberative Panels — Exploring Trade-Offs Participants Will Accept
- Observer Notes and Recording — Preserving Interaction for Later Analysis

Day 5: Document and Text Evidence

- Document Analysis Protocols — Reading Strategies, Minutes and Complaints Systematically
- Source Credibility Assessment — Judging Authorship, Purpose and Representativeness
- Open-Text Survey Responses — Extracting Meaning from Large Comment Sets
- Policy Discourse Analysis — Revealing Framing in Official Statements
- Field Observation Logs — Comparing Stated Practice with Observed Behaviour

Day 6: Coding and Codebook Discipline

- Transcription Conventions — Deciding Verbatim or Intelligent Verbatim Records
- Inductive and Deductive Coding — Combining Emerging and Prior Concepts
- Codebook Construction — Defining Codes, Inclusion Rules and Examples
- Inter-Coder Agreement Checks — Resolving Disagreement Before Themes Form
- Qualitative Analysis Software Use — Organising Extracts and Memos at Scale

Day 7: Thematic Analysis and Interpretation

- Theme Development Steps — Moving from Codes to Meaningful Patterns
- Framework Matrices — Comparing Themes Across Informant Groups
- Negative Case Analysis — Testing Themes Against Contradicting Evidence
- Analytic Memos — Recording Interpretive Reasoning for Later Scrutiny
- Reflexivity Journals — Exposing Researcher Assumptions in Findings

Day 8: Rigour, Trustworthiness and Integration

- Credibility and Transferability Criteria — Defending Findings to Sceptical Committees
- Triangulation Across Sources — Strengthening Claims with Converging Evidence
- Member Checking — Validating Interpretations with Informants
- Mixed Methods Integration — Combining Themes with Performance Indicators
- Audit Trail Assembly — Linking Each Claim to Coded Extracts

Day 9: From Findings to Policy Options

- Problem Definition Statements — Translating Themes into Decision Problems
- Option Generation — Building Distinct Alternatives from Stakeholder Evidence
- Option Appraisal Matrices — Weighing Feasibility, Acceptability and Impact
- Stakeholder Reaction Forecasting — Anticipating Support and Resistance
- Implementation Risk Notes — Flagging Barriers Raised by Informants

Day 10: Practising the Qualitative Evidence Brief

- Sampling and Guide Critique — Applying Fieldwork Design to a Live Case
- Coding Calibration Exercise — Applying Codebook Discipline to Shared Transcripts
- Option Appraisal Rehearsal — Applying Matrices to Thematic Findings
- Balanced Quotation Selection — Presenting Voices Without Cherry-Picking
- Qualitative Evidence Brief — Completing Findings and Options for Committee Decision

Applying Qualitative Research After the Course

- Lead a codebook calibration session with colleagues on transcripts from a current consultation, recording agreement levels and revised code definitions.
- Run a framework matrix on an open-text complaint set and present three themes with an option appraisal to the strategy committee.

Qualitative Research Questions FAQ

What is qualitative research for strategy and policy decisions, and why does it matter now?

It is the disciplined use of interviews, focus groups and documents to explain why people act as they do and to shape strategic choices. It matters now because stakeholders expect to be heard and leaders need to understand the reasons behind shifting indicators.

Which roles gain most from qualitative research for strategy and policy?

Policy analysts, strategy researchers, consultation leads and evaluation specialists gain most. You benefit if you design fieldwork, code transcripts or write option papers that senior committees must act on.

How does qualitative research for strategy and policy differ from a survey design or data analytics course?

It focuses on meaning rather than measurement. Survey and analytics courses count and model responses, while this one teaches interviewing, coding and thematic interpretation, then links themes to policy options instead of statistical estimates.

What do you bring back from qualitative research for strategy and policy training?

You bring back a qualitative evidence brief built on a realistic case, plus a tested codebook, interview guide and option appraisal matrix you can reuse in your next consultation or strategy review.

Qualitative Research: The Way Forward

The qualitative evidence brief first informs which policy or strategic option goes forward to the committee, and it is used by sponsors, advisers and the analysts who defend it. After its first use, revisit the sampling choices: the voices missing from the initial fieldwork often explain the objections that surface once an option moves towards implementation.